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Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore [Mr. THURMOND].

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Lloyd John Ogilvie, offered the following prayer:

Almighty God, we turn to You in the midst of the sickness and suffering of human life. You are the source of the healing power of life and have entrusted to us the awesome challenge of working in partnership with You in discovering the cures of diseases. With Your divine inspiration and guidance, we have fought and won in the battle against so many crippling illnesses. But Father, we need Your continued help in our relentless search for a cure for cancer. Thank You for the progress You have enabled. Bless the scientists, surgeons, and physicians who are on the front line of this conquest. All of us have one or more of three things in common: We have suffered from cancer ourselves, have a loved one or friend who has or is struggling to survive this disease, or have lost someone because of one of the many types of cancer.

Today we feel profound empathy for Senator TOM HARKIN, as he endures the grief of the death of his brother Chuck. Thank You for the gallant battle Chuck fought, for his faith in You, and for the assurance of Your strength and courage he exemplified. Be with his wife, Senator HARKIN, and his family in this time of need. Through our Lord and Saviour who gives us the assurance of eternal life and the determination to press on in the quest for the cure of cancer. Amen.

RECOGNITION OF THE ACTING MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The able acting majority leader, the distinguished Senator from Maine, is recognized.

SCHEDULE

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, on behalf of the majority leader, today the Senate will be in a period of morning business until the hour of 1 p.m. Following morning business, if consent is reached, the Senate will begin consideration of the intelligence authorization bill. It is hoped that the Senate will be able to complete action on the intelligence bill in a reasonable time period and, therefore, Senators can anticipate rollcall votes throughout the day. The majority leader has also indicated that it is his hope that the Senate will be able to proceed to the Department of Defense authorization bill following disposition of the intelligence authorization bill.

I thank my colleagues for their attention.

MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SMITH of Oregon). The Senate will be in a period of morning business until the hour of 1 p.m.

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I be recognized for up to 15 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

COLLEGE AFFORDABILITY AND ACCESS ACT OF 1997

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I am pleased to speak about S. 930, the College Affordability and Access Act of 1997, which I introduced yesterday.

More than 30 years ago, Congress took the historic step of authorizing Federal student aid programs for the purpose of "making available the benefits of postsecondary education to eligible students." Since that time, millions of young Americans have been afforded an opportunity often denied their parents—a college education.

During the three decades since the passage of the Higher Education Act of

1965, both the cost and the importance of postsecondary education have grown dramatically. And, unfortunately, many once again find themselves without the financial resources needed to unlock the door to a better future.

There was a time in Maine when a person armed with a high school diploma and a willingness to work hard could expect to get a job in a paper mill and be assured of a very good wage for life. Today, however, the situation is very different. The manager of one mill told me that it has been 10 years since they hired a high school graduate. Similarly, if you visit the recently built recycling mill in East Millinocket, ME, you are likely to see a handful of computer operators using specialized training to run highly technical equipment.

At a time when 85 percent of the new jobs require some postsecondary schooling, the challenge for the children of less affluent families is to obtain higher education, and the challenge for us is to make that a possibility.

We cannot and should not guarantee our young people success, but we can and should strive to guarantee them opportunity. We have a good record on which to build, as the student aid programs of the Higher Education Act have assisted countless young Americans. Those programs do not, however, do enough to assist middle-class families in coping with the ever-escalating cost of higher education. And they certainly do not do enough to help those for whom the cost of college is a crushing debt load.

Mr. President, much of the impetus for this bill comes from my experience working at Husson College, a small college in Bangor, ME, as well as from the education hearings that Senator JEFFORDS and I held in that city. Husson's students primarily come from lower- and middle-income families; in most cases, they are the first members of their family to attend college. That

● This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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